



Population in China:
 29,000 (1999)
 29,700 (2000)
 37,300 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: None Known

Overview of the Limi

Countries: China

Pronunciation: "Lee-mee"

Other Names:

Population Source:

29,000 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of
 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *S Yunnan:* Yongde
 (24,000), Fengqing (4,000),
 and Yunxian (1,000) counties

Status:

Officially included under Yi

Language: Sino-Tibetan,
 Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo,
 Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi,
 Western Yi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism,
 Animism, Ancestor Worship

Christians: None known

Scripture: None

Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Location: Approximately 30,000 Limi live within southern Yunnan Province in southwest China. The majority inhabit areas within Yongde County. They are the majority group within the Wumulong District and make up a sizable portion of the population in Yalian District. Four thousand Limi live in Fengqing County where they are principally found in the southern part of Guodazhai District and in the southeastern part of Yingpan District. An additional 1,000 Limi live in Yunxian County.¹

preserved and is in active use. Judging from other unique aspects of Limi culture, their language is likely to be found widely different from other Western Yi varieties."³

History: The Limi claim that their ancestors came from a place called Dayuandi in Jingdong County long ago. They reportedly were slaves of a tyrannical master. One day the Limi escaped en masse and won their freedom. They moved to their present locations where they settled down and started new communities.

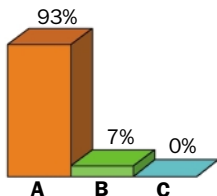


Jamin Pelkey

Customs: Compared to other Yi groups in the area, such as the Western Gaisu and some of the Laluo, the Limi culture has been well preserved. Until recently the Limi strictly refused to intermarry with the Han Chinese or even with other Yi groups. Because of this, they have gained a reputation for being something of an isolated, inward-looking group who have little contact with other people. The Limi joyously celebrate several festivals throughout the course of the year.

Religion: Polytheism, animism, and ancestor worship prevail among the Limi. Regular ceremonies are held to worship the spirits and honor their ancestors.⁴

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity

Identity: The Limi are one of more than 100 groups in Yunnan who have been combined into the official Yi nationality by the Chinese authorities. The Limi were first documented by China Inland Mission's John Kuhn in the 1940s. In his benchmark book, *We Found a Hundred Tribes*, Kuhn listed the Limi as a Lolo-speaking group located at "Qingku."² Qingku is the pre-1949 spelling of today's Jinggu County in Simao Prefecture.

Language: Limi is a part of the Western Yi linguistic branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Jamin Pelkey points out, "Most Limi villages are not mixed with Han Chinese or other minorities. The Limi language, as a result, has been very well

Christianity: The independent mind-set of the Limi has contributed to them being unreached and largely unevangelized today. Few missionaries worked in the area prior to the expulsion of foreigners from China in the 1950s. If the Limi had been so fortunate to have workers like Gladys Aylward targeting them, they would have been greatly blessed. Aylward described the hardship she faced daily in China: "Life is pitiful, death so familiar, suffering and pain so common, yet I would not be anywhere else. Do not wish me out of this, or in any way seek to get me out, for I will not be got out while this trial is on. These are my people, God has given them to me, and I will live or die with them for Him and His glory."⁵